

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

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CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 /084 W

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 1096

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TAGS: PGOV, PINT, IR

SUBJ: NEW HIGH LEVEL CORRUPTION COMMISSION

REFS: (A) 75 TEHRAN 11096, (B) TEHRAN 0739,
(C) TEHRAN 0836

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. ON JANUARY 31 PRIME MINISTER ANNOUNCED FORMATION OF A FIVE-MAN HIGH COUNCIL FOR THE ERADICATION OF CORRUPTION. COUNCIL IS COMPOSED OF PRIME MINISTER HOVEYDA, MININTERIOR JAMSHID AMOUZEGAR, MINECON AFFAIRS AND FINANCE HUSHANG ANSARY, MINJUSTICE SADEGH AHMADI, HEAD OF IMPERIAL INSPECTORATE HOSSEIN FARDOUST, AND CHIEF PUBLIC PROSECUTOR FALLAH R31&-4. GROUP WILL INVESTIGATE CASES OF IRREGULAR PRACTICES BY SENIOR OFFICIALS SUCH AS MINISTERS, ASSISTANTS TO PRIME MINISTER, AMBASSADORS, UNDERSECRETARIES, MAYORS, AND PRESIDENTS AND MANAGING DIRECTORS OF TOP GOVERNMENT CORPORATIONS. PRIME MINISTER SAID SIMILAR COMMISSIONS WOULD BE FORMED TO INVESTIGATE IRREGULARITIES BY LOWER RANKING EMPLOYEES. PRESS FEBRUARY 2 REPORTED FORMATION OF IN-HOUSE ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMITTEES AT MINISTRIES OF LABOR, SOCIAL WELFARE, INTERIOR, HEALTH, AND INDUSTRIES AND MINES.

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2. OFFICIALS FOUND GUILTY WILL BE DISMISSED FOR PERIODS

OF NOT LESS THAN ONE YEAR. NO UPPER LIMIT HAS BEEN SET. PRIME MINISTER CALLED FOR ALL CITIZENS TO SUBMIT EVIDENCE OF CORRUPT PRACTICES, BUT SAID FALSE ACCUSATIONS WOULD BE PUNISHABLE ACCORDING TO EXISTING LAW AND UNSIGNED ALLEGATIONS WOULD BE DISREGARDED. END UNCLASSIFIED.

3. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. NEW COUNCIL HAS SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT AND MORE FOCUSED MANDATE THAN IMPERIAL COMMISSION CREATED NOVEMBER 1975 (REF A). PRIME MINISTER, ANSARY, AND FARDOUST ARE MEMBERS OF BOTH. NEW UNIT WILL CONCENTRATE ON HIGH-LEVEL MISCREANTS WHILE IMPERIAL COMMISSION HAS BROADER MANDATE OF IMPROVING OVERALL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY. IRANIAN OFFICIALS SAY PRIVATELY THERE IS LIKELY TO BE SIGNIFICANT OVERLAP IN PRACTICE, AND THAT NEW COUNCIL REPRESENTS GOI'S RESPONSE TO SHAH'S JANUARY 26 CALL FOR RENEWED EFFORTS TO END CORRUPTION (REF C). SHAH'S REFERENCE TO CORRUPTION CAME IN WAKE OF SCANDALS INVOLVING MAJOR THEFT AND MISUSE OF FUNDS IN GOVERNMENT SUGAR INDUSTRY AND IN CUSTOMS OFFICE. NEITHER COMMISSION HAS CONNECTION WITH, OR MANDATE TO INVESTIGATE, MILITARY MALFEASANCE SUCH AS THAT REPORTED REF (B), BUT MILITARY SCANDAL CONTRIBUTED TO SHAH/GOI DECISION TO STEP UP ANTI-CORRUPTION DRIVE NOW.

4. IRANIAN SOURCES INDICATE NEW COUNCIL WILL COORDINATE WITH IMPERIAL GROUP THROUGH FARDOUST AND ANSARY. A LIST REPORTEDLY ALREADY EXISTS OF OFFICIALS RANKING UP TO CABINET LEVEL WHOSE CASES WILL COME BEFORE COMMISSIONS. DISMISSAL OF MANY IS EXPECTED, AND SEVERAL IRANIANS HAVE EXPRESSED BELIEF THAT PURELY POLITICAL FIRINGS WILL BE DISCREETLY SANDWICHED INTO PROCESS. FACT THAT THOSE WHO REPORT ON OTHERS ARE LIABLE TO PROSECUTION IF THEIR CHARGES ARE RULED UNFOUNDED IS EXPECTED TO LIMIT ALL BUT MOST CLEAR-CUT AND DEDICATED CITIZEN CONTRIBUTIONS. SAME PENALTY IS APPARENTLY NOT INTENDED TO APPLY TO GOVERNMENT INSPECTORS WHO WILL BE ASKED TO SUPPLY CASE EVIDENCE FROM TJIR FILES. MININTERIOR INSPECTORS REPORTEDLY HAVE MANY CASES WHICH COULD BE PUT FORWARD, BUT WHOLE PROCESS IS EXPECTED TO BE HANDLED VERY DELICATELY.

5. COMMENT: SHAH'S EMPHASIS ON CONTINUING FIGHT AGAINST CONFIDENTIAL

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CORRUPTION DURING JANUARY 26 WHITE REVOLUTION ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIO , CLOSELY FOLLOWED BY CREATION OF HIGH-LEVEL INVESTIGATIVE BODIES, HAS CAUSED MANY IRANIANS TO TAKE PRESENT DEVELOPMENTS MORE SERIOUSLY THAN PREVIOUS EFFORTS AND SUGGESTS THAT ANTI-CORRUPTION EFFORT WILL BE MAJOR THEME IN COMING MONTHS.
HELMS

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